

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 19 and 25 have been amended to recite, among other things, a first diffusion stage of a gas distribution apparatus that includes a plurality of independent radial gas zones of differing diameters positioned in spaced concentric fashion. Support for these amendments may be found in the specification as originally filed, for example at page 8, lines 9-13. No new matter is added by these amendments.

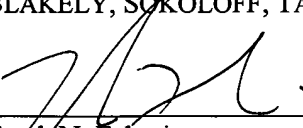
The forgoing amendments patentably distinguish the present claims from Fukunaga et al., US Patent 5,950,925. For example, Fukunaga neither teaches nor suggests the use of a gas distribution apparatus in which a first diffusion plate includes radial gas zones of different diameters. Instead, it appears that all of the radial gas zones of the Fukunaga apparatus are of equal diameter. For at least these reasons then, the claims are patentable over Fukunaga.

The rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph have been rendered moot by the above amendments.

If there are any additional fees associated with this communication, please charge Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,
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